

then it happens, and we are in one. And it is not going to last long. It is only going to last a few more weeks, maybe a couple of months, as to whether, in this moment, we have the ability to rise up and do what we should be doing—even though it does not meet our ideals; it is not the bill each one of us would write on our own—but that moment when we recognize our failure to act at all is a moment missed and not likely to be recaptured during our tenure.

I know for newer Members here that may seem like an exaggeration, but to those of us who have been here a while, we will tell you, these moments do not come very often. Most of the time we go through the routine of reauthorizing bills, reappropriating money, and that consumes about 95 percent of our time—not unimportant business, I will be the first to admit, but fairly routine.

And every now and then—every now and then—in our Nation's history, there have been moments of critical importance: in the early 1960s, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, Medicare; going back in the depression years; the Eisenhower years, with the Federal Highway System in our country. You can point to various times through the 20th century when Congress, contrary to what everyone else thought—this institution—decided to take on an issue that made a difference in our country.

I suspect Barack Obama, in part, had a chance to be elected President of the United States because people he never knew and who never knew him sat here day after day, week after week, and engaged in the debate on civil rights—back long before any of us were ever here, except for BOB BYRD, who was here, and TED KENNEDY, who was here. Those two Members actually were in this Chamber in those days in the early 1960s, and today we are a lot better country. We are a lot better country because of it.

And that was one heck of a fight, let me tell you. I was a young page sitting on the floor here in the summer of 1961 and 1962, when Lyndon Johnson was sitting where the Presiding Officer is, watching the all-night debates on civil rights. And they were raucous, and they were wild, and they were tough. There was no bipartisanship on that, I can tell you. It was down right tough and nasty. Those memories fade. What remains is the fact that this institution had leaders who stood up and said: We are going to get this done. And they achieved those results. And today we celebrate those moments.

We have forgotten about the bitterness that occurred in the debates. No one is asking whether it was bipartisan or whether coalitions got what they wanted. The response was: the United States got closer to that more perfect union that our Founders described more than two centuries ago.

Well, we are in that moment again. And in many ways this is a civil rights debate about health care, because too many of our fellow citizens are denied that right of health care based on economic circumstances beyond their control. The issue is very simply this: Will we come together and decide, at a mo-

ment like this, to get a job done or will we take the easier path and step back because it is a little too tough?

Others have failed at it. It means I might lose some votes back home. But there are certain issues that are worth losing an election over. That is not the worst thing that ever happened to someone. Watching your family go bankrupt, losing your home, watching a child or a spouse suffer because you do not have enough money to buy health care, that is a problem. That is a real problem.

So the issues here are complicated. I know that. I know they are difficult. I know if they were easy, they would have been solved a long time ago. But I have a lot of confidence. I listened to 22 of my colleagues over 5 weeks in a markup become educated and grapple with these issues. We did not resolve all of them, but we educated ourselves and made a difference and produced a bill—a bill that is now the only one in this Chamber that is before us. We hope our colleagues will examine it, take a look at it, make whatever recommendations they could as we move forward. I know the Finance Committee is wrestling with this. Senator BAUCUS and I arrived on the same day in Congress in 1975. We have been friends for 35 years. I know he is struggling to get the right kind of bill to come out of that committee. I wish him the very best and have offered whatever help we can to assist in that effort. I hope we can get a product that moves forward, that we can embrace and be proud of, and that will make a difference.

So for the coming days, I won't take as much time as I have this evening, but I want to talk about this bill in detail. I want to engage in the debate. I want to get away from the cheap politics, the bumper sticker slogans about things that don't exist, the fear that is so easy to arouse in people—the easiest emotion to appeal to is people's fears and hates—and talk constructively and positively about what we can do together to overcome this issue that is a scourge on our society and worthy of this Chamber's efforts.

I thank my colleagues for their the patience this evening and for listening to all of this, and I thank the Chair for his patience. I look forward to the hour when we will come together as a body here—not as Democrats and as Republicans, but as United States Senators—at this moment and pass a major health care reform bill that moves our country to accessibility, to affordability, and equality of health care.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR BEGICH

Mr. DODD. Mr. President on a separate matter, I wish to note that some 20 minutes ago, the junior Senator from Alaska, the Presiding Officer, is the first Member of this new class to come in to win the Golden Gavel, presiding over 100 hours of Senate business. I am the only one here in the

Chamber, but I give you a round of applause.

I am proud to have been here engaged in this discussion and to have you presiding over this conversation. I thank you very much, Senator BEGICH, and congratulations on serving our Senate admirably and as well as you have over these 100 hours.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 Thursday, July 23, 2009.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:42 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, July 23, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JEFFREY ALAN GOLDSTEIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE ROBERT K. STEEL, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ALBERTO M. FERNANDEZ, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

REGINA M. BENJAMIN, OF ALABAMA, TO BE MEDICAL DIRECTOR IN THE REGULAR CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS, AND TO BE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE RICHARD H. CARMONA, TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be captain

JOSEPH P. BURNS
STEPHEN P. CARMICHAEL
CHRISTOPHER S. CHAMBERS
JAMES M. ELLINGER, JR.
KAREN S. EMMEL
MICHAEL J. FITZGERALD
CRAIG W. GOODMAN
GREGORY J. KNIFF
DAVID J. WRAY

To be commander

RAYMOND P. OBENO
KIRK T. MOSS
DAVID G. ORAVEC

To be lieutenant commander

KEVIN M. CASEY
JUDD E. PARTRIDGE
KAREN M. STOKES
BRIAN STRANAHAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be captain

EDDIE L. NIXON

To be commander

STEPHEN GRAHAM
ERNEST C. LEE
KEITH T. SIVERTSON

To be lieutenant commander

MONTE K. BELL
NIELS U. COTHGEN
TRENT W. MARCUS
GERALD S. MAXWELL
ROBERT E. POWERS
TERRENCE P. REIFF
ASTRID G. RIVERA
SHOLI A. ROTBLATT
RAFAEL RUIZ
DENNIS M. WEPPNER